

PHOENIX PARK:

A

K
Leslie (J)

P O E M.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF KILLARNEY.

Ut Pictura, Poesis. HOR.



L O N D O N :

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY

EARL HARCOURT,

LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL, AND GENERAL GOVERNOR

O F

I R E L A N D.

THE FOLLOWING

P O E M

IS,

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT,

I N S C R I B E D,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S.

MOST DEVOTED,

MOST OBEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOHN LESLIE.

A R G U M E N T.

THE Subject.—A Description of the river LIFFY, beginning at the villa of PALMERSTOWN.—The ROYAL HOSPITAL, and MILITARY NURSERY.—Sketch of a REVIEW.—The PHOENIX.—Representation of the Linen Manufacture.—A spinning contest.—Effects of industry.—A contemplative Scene.—A vision, appearance of IERNE; her Idea of the times.—Transition to the LIFFY.—Prospect of DUBLIN, the SOUTH WALL, MERION, and MARINO.—The whole concluding with the BAY.

PHOENIX PARK:

A

P O E M.

TH E royal green domain, the field of arms,
The lordly vale, the Liffy's winding charms,
Awake the rural strain! What native muse
That sees the landscape can her lay refuse?
Queen of the harp, thou lovely, parent dame,
Attend my walk, and lead me by the stream;
There, as we rove the verdant steep along
To thine own melody attune my song.

Lo! modern Tully's villa*, 'midst yon bow'rs,
Commands the scene, and, as his genius, tow'rs:
Pour'd from the cliff and shade, the floods below,
Expanding glide and through the valley flow.

* Palmerstown.

How rich, how grand, 'the view on ev'ry side!
 What happy luxury of rural pride!
 Here spring's gay colours first refresh the eye,
 Here summer blushes with an earlier dye;
 Where fruits, and flow'rs, and plants, promiscuous creep,
 Ceres ascending smiles, and gilds the steep.

While taste and elegance their graces spread,
 The Queen * of all the virtues rears her head;
 Her tow'ring piles †, for helpless youth and age,
 The tender eye, and feeling heart engage.
 See where the centinel his vigil keeps,
 And, in the womb of earth, the thunder sleeps ‡.
 High o'er the vale, the soldier orphans play;
 Wide o'er the plain, the hoary veterans stray;
 There, mix'd with peaceful flocks, they fondly tell,
 How many a hero for his country fell;
 Recount the battles fought in regions far,
 By Anna's rival thunder bolts of war:

* Charity.

† The Royal Hospital, and Military Nursery.

‡ The Magazine.

§ Eugene and Marlborough.

They boast of Wolfe, of William, and the Boyne,
And ancient laurels with the modern twine ;
'Till, in each others tale supremely blest'd,
On the green lap of earth secure they rest.

Hark ! to the field, the spirit-stirring drum
And clarions found, the firm battalions come *,
Awful array ! the banners high are seen,
The gleam of armour waves along the green :
The infantry a solemn movement keep ;
The cavalry the plain in thunder sweep ;
Alert the chieftan diff'rent posts assigns,
Surveys the thick'ning ranks, and forms the lines ;
Where'er yon well-known conqu'ring legions † bend,
Glory, and praise, and fame, their steps attend ;
Their fellows, yet untried, the band admire,
Rivals already seem, and catch their fire ;
Their mutual ardour, and their martial love,
Ierne, and the God of war, approve.

* A Review.

† Those that served in the last war.

Enough of arms. The fair abode of peace *
 Invites to visit ev'ry rural grace ;
 To range the lawn, where, of the human eye
 Unmindful, flocks and deer promiscuous lie ;
 To view the eastern bird, on high display'd,
 That marks the period when a STANHOPE sway'd ;
 Accomplish'd STANHOPE ! fitted to command,
 Who came, as HARCOURT comes, to bless the land ;
 To raise the patriot's fire, the poet's flame,
 And cheer the muse, ally'd to HARCOURT's name †.

While round the circle proud we bend our eyes,
 And catch the various prospects as they rise,
 Swift on the boreal region ‡ fancy throws
 A vivid glance, where happy labour glows ;
 Where industry, in annual glory, reigns,
 And lily streamers paint the verdant plains.

* The villa of Mr. Clements.

† See Pope's Works.

‡ The Northern part of Ireland, the seat of the linen manufacture.

Soon as th' attemper'd sun, and yellower dye
Of bending Ceres, speak the autumn nigh,
Forth from their decent mansions, nymphs and swains
Swarm o'er the hills, and pour along the plains ;
As in the meads the honey lab'ers strive,
And, with their golden sweets, distend the hive :
Arrang'd in social rows, they jocund pull
The flaxen harvest, ponderous and full ;
Various their toil ; cheer'd by the rural talk,
Some strip the pregnant berries from the stalk ;
Some from the glebe the glossy bundles sweep,
And lodge them in the stagnant pool to steep ;
Thence others bear them noisome, and display
Their fable bosoms to the mellowing ray ;
Others suspend them in the crisping smoke,
'Till by the falchion and the beetle broke,
Then wrought, progressive, through the spikey steel,
They fit them pliant to the rapid wheel ;
Early and late revolves the flexile hand ;
The spinner's carol echoes through the land ;

With secret joy, the gen'rous landlord hears,
And to the hamlets round his will declares ;
To thrifty maids, he names the busy day
That tries their skill, and gives the palm away.

Diffusing at the word, the spinner-train
With wheels, embattled, fill the level plain,
Anxious as when on some decisive day,
The brazen engines martial pomp display,
Silent the troops, their bosoms pant for fame,
Till the dire thunders the big war proclaim ;
Their blushing ardor such, and such the fight
That Pallas * would behold with warm delight :
The swains, enamour'd by their fav'rites, stand,
And, throbbing, wait the signal of command ;
'Tis done—At once the purring axles fly,
The humid lip the feet and fingers ply,

* She is supposed to have invented the arts of spinning and weaving.

The thread now lapses in the fervid strife,
Scarcely perceiv'd, so runs the thread of life :
Not with a swifter hand Lachesis spins,
Long is the doubt, what dext'rous maiden wins,
At length, as breathing conquest, one was seen,
Amidst the band, she look'd a rural Queen,
Her rivals yield, she drew so swift, so fine,
Beyond them all high swell'd her silky twine ;
Their lord conducts her from th' admiring croud,
And her superiour skill declares aloud,
The garland gives ; and, ravish'd with her charms,
He clasps the fair Arachne in his arms.

Slight not, ye proud, th' industrious, nor disdain
The homely contest, and digressive strain ;
'Tis from the labours of the wheel and loom,
Ierne's treasures, and her glories, come ;
For these, fair commerce all her sails unfurls,
And the white staple wafts to distant worlds.

The gifts of nature, and the works of art,
Hence, to the landscape, mutual charms impart.
Thick on the purlieus of the royal ground,
Gay villas rise, and gardens smile around ;
The waste is tenanted, is fruitful now,
And cultivation climbs the mountain's brow.

Wrapt in the various busy scene, I rove
The devious winding path, and seek the grove ;
There, in the meditative shade, at rest,
My country's rising glory fill'd my breast.
While I compar'd her state, her bustling times,
With all the miseries of distant climes,
The wild disorder of the Dane and Swede,
By barb'rous war* and plague the havock made,
What pangs dismember'd Poland now must feel,
Rack'd, like a bleeding victim on the wheel ;
What earthquakes shake ! what inundations pour !
What sudden deaths the race of man devour !

* That of the Turks and Russians.

Where, on the globe, a fairer isle than this?
A milder clime, or more replete with blifs?

Thus, all devoted to the musing mood,
Methought a gracious form before me stood;
The bright'ning glade a checker'd radiance fill'd,
A pleasing awe through all my senses thrill'd;
Not unfamiliar was the dress and mien,
The robe of snowy white, the zone of green*,
Divinely wrought, diversify'd with woods,
With mountains, fertile vales, and lordly floods,
Rich plains of toil and culture; but the wild
And native graces still superiour smil'd.
Turning, at length, with higher charms she glow'd,
And, by her side, the radiant symbol † shew'd;
Duteous I bow'd, benign she nearer press'd,
And, with maternal accent, thus address'd:
“ Child of the shade, thy thought I much approve,
“ That glorious prejudice, thy country's love.

* Alluding to the perpetual verdure observable in Ireland.

† The harp.

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† The harp.

“ When Heav’n its blessings on creation fair
“ First lib’ral pour’d, Ierne had her share ;
“ Her splendour, as a twinkling star, begun,
“ Now spreads her beaming brightness like a sun :
“ Long time depress’d, distracted by her kings,
“ Till Albion o’er her stretch’d her healing wings,
“ Protected, nurs’d, in arts and arms she vies,
“ Now great and happy, if her sons were wise.
“ Distressing doubt ! Ill-fated is the hour,
“ When party strives for private self and pow’r ;
“ When merciless the rich, th’ oppressor’s smart
“ Rouzes the swain, and alienates his heart ;
“ Or, where his tyrant master’s herds are fed *,
“ Shiv’ring he sits, and dies for want of bread :
“ When rival vanity each bosom fires ;
“ When gilded poverty to pomp aspires ;
“ When on my heart my alien children † prey,
“ And drain the current of my health away ;

* Alluding to the southern part of Ireland.

† The absentees.

“ When

“ When public spirit fails, relax’d the laws,
 “ Commotion then her secret dagger * draws.”
 Parting, she sigh’d ; and, as I dropt a tear,
 She left the name of HARCOURT on my ear.
 Auspicious HARCOURT ! Happy hours that bring
 The sage approv’d, the mentor of a king !
 Princely he graces delegated sway ;
 Who knows to rule, will teach us to obey,
 Obey like men ; not wantonly contend
 Our firm protector, counsellor, and friend.
 Forgive, great Sir, if an ingenuous zeal
 Anticipate thine ardour for our weal.

Emerging from the shade, with new delight,
 The eye and fancy stretch a distant flight,
 To LIFFORD’S calm retreat, remote from strife,
 Whose motto † marks the tenour of his life ;

* In allusion to the tumults of the north and south.

† BE JUST, AND FEAR NOT——taken from the following passage in Shakespeare.

Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
 To silence envious tongues. *Be just, and fear not.*
 Let all the ends, thou aim’st at, be thy country’s,
 Thy God’s, and Truth’s.——

How very applicable the above lines are to the worthy and respectable character here spoken of, the voice of the public hath, more than once, acknowledged.

To yon exalted, regal tow'r ; and where
The mountain heaves to meet the bending sphere ;
Thence cros the lawny green, and furzy dale,
To the proud steep, that hangs o'er Liffy's vale ;
Widely diffus'd below, the nymphs and swains
Indulge their sports on her Elyfian plains ;
Girt to the knee, the snowy-footed dame
Her linen twirls ; the swimmer cuts the stream ;
The bark, repassing by the margin green,
Varies the view, and animates the scene.
Not distant far, a groupe, on Ceres' hill,
Winnow their treasures for the neighb'ring mill ;
Around the gladfome swains and damsels laugh,
And, to the winds, consign their care and chaff.
Where curv'd the salmon springs, the glassy ridge *
Pours steep, and foamy, to the antique bridge,
Through the arch'd vistas, swift the currents glide,
And lose their sweetness in the briny tide.

* The leap at Island-bridge.

Ah ! crystal stream, once past thy flow'ry meads,
Thy verdant vales, how soon thy beauty fades !
Winding but now, o'er golden channels spread,
You creep obscure, thro' darksome mazes led ;
The painted margins are no longer thine,
No lucid mirrours in thy bosom shine ;
Choak'd, and embrown'd, polluted is thy flood,
Chaf'd on thy shores, thy Naiads drench'd in mud.
So the chaste nymph, remov'd from rural plains,
Her native purity no more retains.

Lo ! fair Eblana's * lofty tow'rs ascend,
And swelling fabricks, far and wide, extend !
Perhaps, too broad a circuit she displays,
And, cumb'rous, to the distant villa strays ;
Mark how her spirit, skill, and wisdom shine,
On yonder tract, where runs her southern line † ;
The length'ning bulwark stretches far away,
Baffles the storm, and gains upon the sea :

* The ancient name of Dublin.

† The South wall, building under the direction of the Ballast-office.

Breasting the waves, their shock it firm endures,
And commerce, from the fatal shelves, secures.
What scenes superb, display'd on ev'ry side !
What native dignity and rural pride !
Slow from the bay exalted Merion swells,
And the luxuriant Richmond far excels ;
Art's rich embroid'ry glistens o'er her plains,
Simple and great, here various nature reigns.

Behold Marino, elegantly grac'd,
With ev'ry touch of novelty and taste ;
Where CHARLEMOUNT, with lib'ral hand and heart,
Joins British majesty to Latian art.
No, not Parthenope * herself can boast
A fairer harbour, and a richer coast ;
In one same circle pent their beauties lie,
Ours, varying still, ne'er pall upon the eye :
Here, proudly stretch our barks ; there, anchor'd ride ;
And a new picture flows with ev'ry tide.

* The ancient name of Naples.

No, nor let Caprea *, once a royal seat,
Cent'ral as Howth †, with Howth contend in state ;
What vivid hues its lofty brows adorn,
Azure and purple, and the tints of morn !
Thine eastern ridge, and southern mountain blue
Close the wide circuit of this various view.

* Where Tiberius had a villa.

† From its similar situation in the bay of Naples.

T H E E N D.



